

## PRAYING AND SIFTING.

BY MARY DIETZ.

"Simon, Simon, behold, satan asked to have you, that he might sift you as wheat. But I made supplication for thee, that thy faith fail not: and do thou when once thou hast *turned again*, stablish thy brethren. St Luke xxii, 21-22." (Revised version.) It is very evident that even at this day and age of the world, that Jesus our Savior, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, still gives over his believers to satan to be sifted. Do then, as believers in Christ Jesus, who are striving to follow in his footsteps—we make supplications for those who are passing through a siege of sifting?

Are we praying a prayer of faith for them, and giving them helpful advice, doing all we can to help strengthen them, that their faith fail them not.

I fear we do not always do as Jesus did. Do we not sometimes turn a cold shoulder? Withdraw the hand of Christian sympathy? Are there not expressions made like *this* "Oh! I knew Brother or Sister so and so would forget their religion, just like so and so, did, I knew *our* church was not high toned—or popular enough for them," forgetting that the *first* and greatest reason we should love *our* church—is that the gospel truths we claim, belong to *Jesus*, not to *us*. That is why we should love, and obey them; that is why we should sorrow, but not forget to pray, when others depart from them. If we love the souls of our friends let us not prophesy wrong of them, as that is nearly the same as praying that those things shall come to pass.

Again if our master had acted toward Peter as we do toward the Brethren, would Peter ever have "*turned again*" and so fully repented of his sin—so humbly repented, and so meekly, and yet more closely than ever before follow the master? Can we mention the good deeds of love and mercy Peter did after his sifting? Yes, even after he positively denied the blessed Lord. This is no encouragement for *us* to sin, but it is an encouragement for us to *fully* repent if we have sinned, and arise in the strength of Jesus, going forward as Peter did, keeping so closely by the master's side that satan cannot

creep in between our shepherd and his humble follower.

Again if Jesus had not prayed for Peter, would he ever have preached the wonderful sermon on the day of *pentecost*? What did he tell his converts—to repent, and be baptized—or did he tell them those things had gone out of date? Verily *no*. Peter was willing then to preach the gospel and baptize according to our Lord and Master. He was ready to write his "*epistles*" so filled with the earnest desire to stablish the Brethren,—by pointing them to Jesus, by pointing them to the master whose *footprints* are marked by his blessed, life giving, and ever abiding truths; and telling them to *walk in them*. 1 Peter. ii, 21. Peter knew there was no better way of coming in touch with Jesus than to step just where Jesus had stepped; and that there was no more sure way of giving ourselves over to satan, than to begin by allowing the old cunning deceiver one inch of ground.

And as Peter says in his "*epistles*" (*last two verses*), "Ye therefore, beloved beware lest being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to him be the glory both now and forever, amen". In conclusion we must say if, there had not been a weakness in human nature toward drifting from the right, why need our master and his disciples give so many warnings to "*beware*."

Therefore is it not our duty to ever pray for one another, and in so doing we will be also fitting *OURSELVES* for a closer walk with our Savior. Let us try more and more each day to pray for our brother or sister—rather than judge them, and pass a sentence upon them.

Yours for the truth.

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Is a person well brought up when she makes persons in her presence feel that they are not?—Chas. D. Warner.

The best fortune that you can leave to your children is the heritage of an unspotted life.

No two things differ more than hurry and dispatch. Hurry is the mark of a weak mind, dispatch of a strong one.—GOLTON.

## THE EVIL OF MAN'S HEART.

BY A. O. HUMPHREY.

We have before us a subject which brings to our minds the language of our Lord when he said: "O, ye hypocrites, ye draw near to me with your lips but your hearts are far from me." How often do we see men and women professing Christ with their lips but proving by their daily walk and conversation that their hearts are far from him. They go to church on the Lord's day with a long face, tears roll down their cheeks during the sermon, and in the house of God one would think them the best Christians in the world. But see them on a week day and you could not tell them from the worldly man or woman. Some even take God's name in vain. How true the text "The very imagination of man's heart is evil."

Some will say that Brother A. or Brother B. is a good Christian, but remember "All is not gold that glitters." By way of illustration: We can take brass and by polishing it make it glitter like gold. But, oh, how soon it will return to its original color. Just so with men and women; we may take them into the water and wash them but if that old evil nature is not changed they will soon return to their old habits. To serve God acceptably all evil habits must be abandoned. Some one may say you are judging. The Lord tells us that "a good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. By their fruit ye shall know them." Then if he knew what he was saying, and we think he did, how dare we profess to be a child of God and take his name in vain, be an adulterer, a thief, a liar or a drunkard? Our Lord tells us we can not serve two masters. There is no half way ground; we must be in God's service or in the Devil's.

An American Christian author tells of a legend of a wondrous golden organ that was in some ancient monastery, which once, when in danger of being stolen was cast by the monks into a deep river to be hidden from the robbers; and in the waters, buried out of sight in the floods, it still played on, pouring out its sweet music. This legend illustrates the heart which has in it the secret of Christian joy. Floods of sorrow may roll over it, but in the depths its song is not silence.